



Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

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NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Put pupils first – give teachers time to teach!

The SSTA industrial action began on 24 October to give teachers back control of their time. Teachers need to focus upon teaching and learning and put to one side those duties and tasks that do not help the teacher in the classroom. The first phase of the action re-established the base line of the 35 hour week teachers' contract. The second phase of the guidance looks at tasks and responsibilities that have 'overtaken' the work of teachers. The guidance is included within this newsletter.

The SSTA has campaigned for a number of years to reduce teacher workload in all aspects of a teacher's work but especially in the senior phase. The SSTA asked for a more measured implementation of the new national qualifications but the government moved forward regardless.

It came as no surprise to SSTA members that the accountability and micromanagement systems forced teachers and young people to breaking point. However, there is no satisfaction in knowing you were right all along. But it is our job to ensure that the national 5 changes proposed for 2017 come early enough and don't add to teacher workload. The SSTA is engaging through the Assessment and National Qualifications working group and SQA to ensure we find a workable solution to both National 4 and National 5.



Euan Duncan
SSTA President

Euan Duncan, SSTA President, said recently "SSTA members care passionately about the young people they teach and getting the best qualifications. However, the pressure and stress suffered by both young people and teachers cannot be allowed to continue. We hope the Deputy First Minister can work with the SSTA to find a way forward and put measures in place to help the situation."

Our campaign has consistently pushed for a reduction in a system that all sides acknowledge is workload heavy in this current session. This is not just for ourselves but for the young people we teach. If we achieve our aim our young people will also benefit.

The SSTA's view is that teacher workload has not, and is unlikely to be, significantly reduced in the current session, especially in the area of national qualifications. We therefore have no option but to move into industrial action to protect another cohort of young people and our members.

SSTA

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SSTA Guidance 'Action Short of Strike Action'

Further guidance for all members, members in management positions, guidance, pupil support and members designated as establishment contact (ultimately 'named person').

The following are **core duties** that apply to **all** teachers in Scotland.

- Teaching of assigned classes and cover for absent colleagues up to a maximum of 22.5 hours per week
- An allocation of 7.5 hours for preparation for assigned classes and correction of the work of assigned classes
- The remaining 5 hours a week is **collegiate time**

The 35 hour working week is the fundamental basis of the teacher contract. All duties and responsibilities must be contained within the schools Working Time Agreement (WTA). The main focus for all teachers should be supporting teaching and learning.

Collegiate time is the additional 5 hours per week. The allocation of the 5 hours is determined by the School's WTA and is binding on all signatories and must be honoured.

If a member is asked to undertake any additional duty, not included in the above, the deciding factor is the 35 hour working week. If you have available time it is appropriate to undertake the work. If the requested work would cause you to exceed the 35 hour week then you should agree a priority for the duties with your line manager. If a request for additional duties requires time above 35 hours it should be declined as it is not a contractual requirement.

Preparation and Correction

All preparation and correction of pupils work (including homework) must be achieved within the allocated time in the schools WTA. It is not possible to prepare individual work plans for every pupil in the class for every lesson. All planning needs to be realistic and should be sufficient for the teacher to deliver the lesson. The need to evidence all aspects of learning and complete school or local authority developed system that do not assist the delivery of the lesson should be declined.

Likewise it is not possible to correct in detail all pieces of every pupils work on all occasions. Members should consider a strategy to focus on a particular aspect of the work to assess at a particular point, and a schedule of more detailed correction of an element of the pupils work over a reasonable period. There is no need to evidence the work for outside bodies as there is sufficient naturally occurring evidence within the class.

Teachers are asked not to participate in book checking exercises that focus on making assessment of teachers work. This is not a good use of teachers or those in management positions time.

Cover for Absent Colleagues

Principal Teachers who manage a number of subjects are often expected to prepare cover work for absent colleagues. This is not unreasonable on a short term basis and recognised in the time allocation for management responsibilities. It is however, not expected that the preparation and correction of pupils work will be undertaken by the teacher who sets the work. In the case of long term absence the supply teacher will undertake these duties.

Cover for Vacant Posts

Supply teachers will undertake the work required in preparation and correction of the classes allocated. It is essential that supply teachers have the normal allocation of time that permanent teachers are given to undertake the task. Where teachers agree to help in the interests of the pupils, to cover a vacancy or long-term absence, teachers need to ensure sufficient time is allocated for this additional duty over and above their normal assigned classes. There also needs to be an acceptance that the correction of work will be of a 'holistic' nature in these instances.

Professional Review and Development (PRD)

All teachers are required to undertake 3 hours PRD that is a fundamental part of continuing GTCS registration. The management of PRD is becoming increasingly problematic as line managers, due to a range of other demands, are having difficulties finding adequate time to engage in the task in a meaningful way. The school needs to ensure adequate time is set aside for the procedure to be undertaken. Members should seek support from the school representative to ensure adequate time is made available.

Management Positions

Members holding positions with additional responsibility have time allocated within the 22.5 hour teaching time. Members are advised to restrict their responsibility to the time allocated. Outside of the time allocated for this responsibility the member should focus on their primary teaching function.

Teachers have been undertaking tasks that are either outside the WTA or tasks where sufficient time has not been allocated. Members are asked to consider whether tasks that are for administrative purposes should be declined if they are not necessary for teaching and learning.

Members in management positions are advised to ensure any task they are asked to undertake is accounted for within the 35 hour week and the schools WTA. Likewise any task they are requiring teachers they manage to undertake should be accounted within the same conditions.

Should insufficient time be allocated to perform the additional responsibility, members are advised to inform their line manager and seek support from the SSTA school representative.

Guidance and Pupil Support

All allocated teaching and engagement time with pupils should be contained within the maximum 22.5 hour teaching time. To support this teaching and engagement time an additional 7.5 hours of preparation and correction time is allocated.

Due to school budget cuts over a number of years the number of teachers who support pupils has also reduced. The caseload for teachers has steadily increased without any recognition of the time required. There is a limit to what can be expected and members need to restrict the available time to developing the pupil teacher relationship. Members should determine the extent of the record keeping required for their professional use and decline requests for school or local authority administrative purposes.

In many cases guidance and pupil support teachers are allocated teaching duties and these take priority in terms of teaching, preparation and correction time. This will then determine the time available within the schools WTA for other duties. Members are advised to identify the time for pupil engagement and ensure that this work is undertaken within the available time.

The time allocated for teaching and engagement with pupils should be sufficient to undertake the duties required. Should the time allocated be insufficient members are advised to inform their line manager and seek support from the SSTA school representative.

Establishment Contact (ultimately 'named person')

A member who has the responsibility of being the establishment contact must hold a promoted post in the school. The member should ensure that they are the most appropriate person for the responsibility of supporting young people and their families. It is important to assess the individual case and allocate the appropriate person and not rely on the most convenient or capable.

They are not required to support children and young people after school hours, at weekends or school holidays. This is the responsibility of the local authority. The teacher is appointed as the establishment contact due to their knowledge and experience. The major focus of their work is to support the young person and their family's.

SSTA Guidance 'Action Short of Strike Action' - Cont'd

The establishment contact provision is not a 'cheap' option. The school needs to have considered the importance of the role, a strategy and a series of measures to deliver the requirements. The school should ensure that administrative duties are provided and undertaken by an appropriate member of support staff.

The time allocated for teaching and engagement with pupils should be sufficient to undertake the duties required. Should the time allocated be insufficient members are advised to inform their line manager and seek support from the SSTA school representative.

All the allocated hours for teaching, responsibility time, preparation and correction should be ring-fenced as an essential part of a teacher's work and not available for allocation to other tasks.

The Future for Teachers in Scotland

The Government is determined to bring about improvements in education by 'closing the attainment gap' and give all young people the opportunity to fulfil their potential. A major factor in achieving this goal is the teacher workforce. Without a talented, committed and respected professional teacher workforce this objective cannot be realised.

Scotland is facing a deepening crisis in retaining and recruiting teachers and headteachers in its schools. The Government needs to acknowledge that teachers working conditions and remuneration have failed to keep pace with the rapidly changing education environment. Schools and teachers need to adapt to meet the demands of a modern education system.

The removal of a large number of posts with additional responsibilities from schools, the ending of the Chartered Teacher pay scale (a loss of £8,028 additional salary) and an uncompetitive classroom teacher (a lecturer in an FE College can earn £4,263 more) and headteacher pay scale (in England can earn up to £21,964 more) is having a negative impact. As a consequence teaching is increasingly perceived as an unattractive profession with an impossible workload demand, restricted career path and an uncompetitive salary scale. Addressing the structure of schools and its workforce are essential elements in the Scottish Government challenge to 'close the attainment gap'.

Alongside measures to control teacher workload SSTA is proposing a series of measures to restore a career structure and appropriate levels of pay for teachers and headteachers. These include

- A reduction in the 22.5 hours teaching week
- More subjects recognised as 'practical' with smaller classes
- A need for a career structure that gives opportunities to gain experience and responsibility including supply teachers
- A salary scale that is competitive and retains and recruits teachers
- The reintroduction of principal teacher of subjects
- Guidance and pupil support teachers recognised and remunerated appropriately
- The establishment of posts with 'whole school' responsibilities